

**A METHOD OF STORING A PILL IN A COLLAPSIBLE
CUP WITH VENTED POCKET**

Cross-Reference to Related Applications

5 This application is a continuation of co-pending U.S. Application No. 10/360,074 filed February 6, 2003, which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

Statement Regarding Federally Sponsored Research or Development.

Not Applicable.

Appendix.

10 Not Applicable.

Background of the Invention

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to containers and, more particularly, to a method of assembling a collapsible cup with vented pocket.

15 Seasonal allergy sufferers and others who take a daily pill to remedy aches and pains have had a difficult time administering their medication. Because of this, it is desirous to find a better way of assembling a collapsible cup with vented pocket.

2. Related Art

20 Solid cups having a pill-dispensing pocket are known. These cups, however, have a problem in that the “pocket” or pill-dispensing area, requires the pill to be placed in a certain orientation. In addition, only pills of a certain size can be deployed in the pill-dispensing area.

Collapsible cups are known in the camping arts.

Summary of the Invention

It is in view of the above problems that the present invention was developed. The method of the present invention comprises the steps of first forming a base member. Second, a plurality of telescoping components are assembled. Each of the plurality of telescoping components are adapted to form a substantially liquid-tight seal upon telescopic extension by friction-fitting the plurality of telescoping components together. Next, one of the plurality of telescoping components is attached to the base member to form an impervious junction between the base member and one of the plurality of telescoping components. Finally, a vented pocket is fixedly attached to another of the plurality of telescoping components.

Further features and advantages of the present invention, as well as the structure and operation of various embodiments of the present invention, are described in detail below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and form a part of the specification, illustrate the embodiments of the present invention and together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention. In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a side view of a typical collapsible cup with vented pocket, shown without a mating lid, with a plurality of telescoping components in expanded form;

Figure 2 is a top view of the collapsible cup with vented pocket shown without the mating lid;

Figure 3 is a perspective of the collapsible cup with vented pocket, shown without the mating lid, with a plurality of telescoping components in expanded form;

Figure 4 is a side view of the collapsible cup with vented pocket, shown with the plurality of telescoping components in retracted form, with the mating lid included.

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Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

Referring to the accompanying drawings in which like reference numbers indicate like elements, Figure 1 illustrates a collapsible cup with vented pocket. Reference character 20 generally indicates the apparatus of the present invention. A base member 22 provides foundational support for the apparatus 20.

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The base member 22 is cylindrical in shape. However, it is envisioned that the base member 22 may be any shape suitable to maintain the structural integrity of the apparatus 20. The base member has a contoured lip 24 on its upper side, thus increasing the overall circumference of the base member 22 as one views the base member from bottom to top.

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The base member 22 supports a plurality of telescoping components 26. Figure 1 shows that five components preferably comprise the plurality of telescoping components 26. It is preferred that each component comprising the plurality of telescoping components 26 be cylindrical in shape. It is, however, understood that component shape may be any geometrical shape allowing telescopic motion, such as square, triangular, or any host of other shapes.

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Likewise, it is also understood that the total number of components comprising the plurality of telescoping components 26 may deviate from five. This allows one to properly size the apparatus 20 for an appropriate fluid volume.

A fluid-tight seal 28 is formed by friction-fitting the plurality of telescoping components 26 together. This is possible because the plurality of telescoping components 26 are a series of progressively varying circumference either progressively-decreasing or progressively-increasing depending on the initial point of reference. Friction fitting allows proper liquid containment when using the apparatus 20. An outermost telescoping component 30 is attached to the base member 22 to form an impervious junction 32 between the base member 22 and the outermost telescoping component 30. The impervious junction 32 is necessary in order to allow proper liquid containment when using the apparatus.

As depicted in Figure 2, a vented pocket 34 (alternatively termed a pill basket or vented pill basket) is attached to an innermost telescoping component 36. The innermost telescoping component 36 is the final component, or end piece of the plurality of telescoping components 26.

Referring simultaneously to Figures 2 and 3, the plurality of telescoping components 26 are a series of cylinders having decreasing circumference. This allows the plurality of telescoping components 26 to friction-fit together and form the fluid-tight seal 28. The outermost telescoping component 30 is molded to the base member 22 to form the impervious junction 32. It is envisioned that the impervious junction 32 may also be formed by an adhesive, weld, bond, or other suitable attachment means.

The vented pocket 34 is formed by attaching a rectangular plate 38 perpendicularly with a semi-circular plate 40. The attachment of the rectangular plate 38 to the semicircular plate 40 may be by any suitable method, including, but not limited to, molding, welding, or adhesion. Narrow edges 42 of the rectangular plate 38 are molded into an inside edge 44 of the innermost telescoping component 36. A curved edge 46 of the semi-circular plate 40 is also molded into

the inside edge 44 of the innermost telescoping component 36. Likewise, the attachment of the narrow edges 42 of the rectangular plate 38 and the curved edge 46 of the semi-circular plate 40 may be performed by any suitable method, such as molding, welding, or adhesion.

The vented pocket 34 allows liquid transmission to occur. This is possible because both
5 the rectangular plate 38 and the semi-circular plate 40 are perforated. Rectangular plate perforations 48, as shown, are narrow rectangular incisions through the rectangular plate 38. Upper ends of the rectangular plate perforations 48 are rounded. Semi-circular plate perforations 50 are both circular and oval in shape. It is, however, understood that on both the rectangular plate 38 and the semi-circular plate 40, the perforations may be any shape that permits liquid
10 (such as water, cola, or juice) to flow therethrough.

Using the apparatus 20 involves obtaining a pill from a store, one's pants pocket, medicine cabinet, or other appropriate place, and placing the pill into the vented pocket 34. The plurality of telescoping components 26 would then be actuated by hand. A person would grasp the rectangular plate 38 with the fingers of one hand and place his other hand on the base
15 member 22. The person would then pull the rectangular plate 38 up, thus extending the plurality of telescoping components 26, while maintaining pressure on the base member 22 with his other hand. It is, however, understood that placement of the pill into the vented pocket 34 may also be automated, such as in a factory assembly line employing programmable logic controllers or other automated processes. Likewise, in similar fashion, actuation of the plurality of telescoping
20 components 26 may also be automated.

Retracting the apparatus 20 involves pushing down on the rectangular plate 38 or innermost telescoping component 36 until the plurality of telescoping components 26 are in their

retracted position. As shown in Figure 4, the base member has a mating lid 52 that covers the apparatus 20 when the plurality of telescoping components 26 are in their retracted position. The mating lid 52 fits snugly over the apparatus 20 by sliding on top of the apparatus until movement is stopped by the contoured lip 24. The mating lid 52 allows one to encapsulate the pill in the apparatus 20 and to make the apparatus smaller and more mobile. It is envisioned that one may transport the apparatus 20 in one's pocket, brief case, or similar carrying location, once the plurality of telescoping components 26 are in their retracted position and the mating lid 52 is placed over the apparatus.

In view of the foregoing, it will be seen that the several advantages of the invention are achieved and attained.

The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of this invention and its practical application to thereby enable others skilled in the art to best utilize the invention in various embodiments and with modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

As various modifications could be made in the constructions and methods herein described and illustrated without departing from the scope of the invention, it is intended that all matter contained in the foregoing description or shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative rather than limiting. Thus, the breadth and scope of the present invention should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments, but should be defined only in accordance with the following claims appended hereto and their equivalents.